UNITED NATIONS

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Secretariat

ST/IC/1995/35
16 June 1995

INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: STATUS REPORT FORM ON DEPENDENCY BENEFITS*

1. All staff members on the Headquarters payroll, other than short-term staff, were required in 1994 to complete the status report and request for payment of dependency benefits (P.84 form) for the years 1992, 1993 and 1994. The information provided by staff members on that form has been recorded in the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS).

2. The 1995 P.84 forms were designed with the purpose of reviewing the benefits only for the staff currently in receipt of them. Since some of the staff were included in the IMIS only in the latter part of 1994, it is now required that these staff members, in addition to all those who receive dependency benefits, review, correct and supplement the data provided on the printed P.84 forms.

3. The form has been modified to eliminate abbreviations and also contains, on the reverse side, a list of documents that are required by the Office for Human Resources Management for continuation of the benefits. It will be distributed through the Executive Offices, and should be returned to the Office for Human Resources Management on a staggered schedule and in alphabetical order by the last name of staff, in an area of the Secretariat building to be designated at a future date. Staff will be informed of the schedule and the location through issuance of an addendum to the present circular. Failure to complete and submit the form to the Office for Human Resources Management will result in discontinuance of the benefits.

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* Personnel Manual index No. 3340.

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4. It will therefore be unnecessary this year for staff with no dependants to fill out the P.84 forms. However, those staff who, for the first time, wish to claim a spouse's, child's or secondary dependant's benefit should submit their request in writing directly to their personnel officer in the Office for Human Resources Management.

5. Under the provisions of staff rule 104.4, staff members are required to notify the Secretary-General in writing of any changes in their marital or dependency status. Notification of changes that occur after the P.84 (1-95) form has been returned to the Office for Human Resources Management, and that could not have been foreseen at the time, should be made in writing to the staff member's personnel officer.

Dependent spouse

6. A dependent spouse of a staff member as defined in staff rule 103.24 (a) is one who has no occupational earnings or whose gross occupational earnings do not exceed the earnings limit established for this purpose in rule 103.24. This earnings limit is the gross salary of the lowest entry level of the General Service salary scale applicable in the country of the spouse's place of work. In addition, in the case of a spouse of a staff member in the Professional category and above, the spouse's occupational earnings may not exceed the gross salary of a staff member at the G-2, step 1, level, for New York, for recognition as a dependent spouse.

7. For New York, the earnings limit for 1994 was $27,328 gross per year, and for 1995, the amount is $28,357 (the gross salary in effect on 1 January of the year concerned for a staff member at the G-2, step 1, level). For other duty stations, the earnings limit is equivalent to the lowest entry level of the United Nations General Service salary scales, effective 1 January 1994 and 1995, as appropriate, for the duty station concerned.

8. Staff in the General Service and related categories will receive for a dependent spouse the spouse allowance established for the duty station. Staff in the Professional category and above and in the Field Service category will receive a dependency benefit in the form of salary and post adjustment at the dependency rates. The amount of this benefit is the difference between salary and post adjustment at the single rate and salary and post adjustment at the dependency rates.

9. When the spouse's occupational earnings exceed the established earnings limit, no dependency benefit (spouse allowance or dependency rates of salary and post adjustment) will be paid in his/her respect. However, an adjusted dependency benefit may be paid when the spouse's gross occupational earnings are less than the sum of the earnings limit and the appropriate dependency benefit. The adjusted benefit will be equal to the amount by which the sum of the earnings limit and the appropriate dependency benefit exceeds the spouse's gross occupational earnings.

Dependent children

10. As defined in staff rule 103.24 (b) and paragraph 3 of administrative instruction ST/AI/278/Rev.1 on the definition of dependency status, the following children may be eligible for dependency status:

(a) A staff member's natural child;

(b) A staff member's legally adopted child;

(c) A staff member's stepchild, if residing with the staff member;

(d) If legal adoption of the child is not possible because there is no statutory provision for adoption or any prescribed court procedure for formal recognition of customary or de facto adoption in the staff member's home country or country of permanent residence, then a child in respect of whom the following conditions are met:

(i) The child resides with the staff member;

(ii) The staff member can be regarded as having established a parental relationship with the child;

(iii) The child is not a brother or sister of the staff member;

(iv) The number of children for which dependency benefits are being claimed by the staff member under this subparagraph does not exceed three.

11. For any of the above-mentioned children to be recognized as a staff member's dependent child, the following requirements must be met:

(a) The child must be under the age of 18 years; or, if the child is 18 years or older but under the age of 21 years, he/she must be in full-time attendance at a school or university (or similar institution);

(b) The staff member must provide main and continuing support for the child.

The age and school attendance requirements indicated under (a) will be waived if a child is physically or mentally incapacitated for substantial gainful employment, either permanently or for a period expected to be of long duration.

12. A children's allowance is payable for each dependent child of a staff member. In the case of staff in the General Service and related categories, the amount of the children's allowance is established for each duty station. In the case of staff in the Professional category and above and in the Field Service category, the amount of the children's allowance is that established in staff regulation 3.4. However, in the case of a staff member in the Professional category and above or in the Field Service category who has no dependent spouse, the staff member will receive for the first child, in lieu of the children's allowance, the dependency rates of salary and post adjustment. This benefit is granted subject to paragraph 15 below.

13. For payment of a dependency benefit in respect of a child in the form of salary and post adjustment at the dependency rates, staff rule 103.17 (b) (ii) requires that the staff member provide substantial and continuing support for one or more of his/her children. For the provision of such support to be recognized, the sum of the staff member's (a) gross salary less the difference between the single and dependency rates of net salary and (b) post adjustment at the single rate, must not be less than two thirds of the gross occupational earnings of his/her spouse. If this requirement is not met, the staff member will receive salary and post adjustment at the single rate and dependency allowance for the child.

14. If a staff member or his/her spouse receives a dependency benefit in the form of a government grant in respect of a child, the amount is subtracted from any dependency benefit payable by the United Nations in respect of that child. The amount of any such grant received in respect of each child should be indicated in section III of the P.84 (1-95) form.

15. It is the staff member's responsibility to give written notice to his/her personnel officer if his/her child marries. If the staff member continues to claim the child as a dependant, documentary evidence satisfactory to the Secretary-General is required under paragraph 19 below for the child to continue to be recognized as his/her dependant.

16. It is also the staff member's responsibility to give written notice to the Personnel Officer if his/her child ceases to be in full-time attendance at an educational institution. The staff member is required to submit a certificate of school attendance for his/her dependent child between the ages of 18 and 21 at the end of each school year, except for the staff who are entitled and submit a yearly education grant claim. While an effort will be made to remind staff members of this obligation, failure to submit the school certificate will result in discontinuance of the dependency benefits and in recovery of any overpayment. Such recovery will be made through deduction of 20 per cent of the staff member's net monthly salary until the full amount of overpayment is completed. The dependency status of a child between the ages of 18 and 21 continues through a period of vacation only if the child enrols for full-time attendance after the vacation. Otherwise, the dependency status ceases as of the last day of attendance of the preceding school term.

17. In addition to the staff member's certification that he/she provides main and continuing support for the child, documentary evidence of such support satisfactory to the Secretary-General will always be required if a child:

(a) Does not reside with the staff member because of divorce or legal separation;

(b) Is married;

(c) Is regarded as a dependent child under paragraph 3 (d) of administrative instruction ST/AI/278/Rev.1.

Secondary dependant

18. A dependency allowance is payable in respect of only one secondary dependant. It is not payable for a secondary dependant if the staff member is already receiving dependency benefits in respect of a dependent spouse. A secondary dependant may be the father, mother, brother or sister of the staff member of whose financial support the staff member provides one half or more, and, in any case, at least twice the amount of the dependency allowance. In the case of a brother or sister, he/she must be under the age of 18 or, if in full-time attendance at a school or university (or similar educational institution), under the age of 21. However, if the brother or sister is either physically or mentally incapacitated for substantial gainful employment, either permanently or for a period expected to be of long duration, the requirements as to age and school attendance will be waived.

Designation of beneficiary

19. Staff members are required under staff rule 112.5 to notify the Secretary-General of any revocations or changes of beneficiaries. A beneficiary for the purposes of the rule is designated at the time of appointment on the "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form (P.2 [10.83]). Staff members, particularly those who made the designation at the time of their appointment many years ago, are urged to review, through their personnel officer, whether their original designation is still correct and to make any changes thereto if they wish.

20. It is also suggested that staff members take this opportunity to examine their original designation of beneficiaries for the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and for the Group Life Insurance Plan. Notification of changes should be sent to the Secretary of the Pension Fund, room S-765, or to the Insurance Section, room S-2755, as appropriate.

21. The present circular supersedes information circular ST/IC/1994/16 and Add.1 of 4 May and 30 August 1994, respectively.